

Fisheries Service Weekly Report
September 27, 2012

DIVISION UPDATES

Estuarine & Marine Fisheries Division

Shark Finning – Senator Frosh – Meeting with Senator Frosh tentatively scheduled for 10/19.

Menhaden – Public hearings scheduled for Amendment 2.

Commercial Striped Bass Tag Reduction / Alternative Management Update - Finalizing a plan for billing commercial striped bass permit holders for tags that they order in 2013. We are coordinating this with Licensing & Registration Service and Information Technology so that everyone involved is aware of the change. In an effort to reduce the number of tags we distribute, fishermen will be limited in the number of tags that they can initially order.

Coastal Fisheries - Attended the Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Advisory Panel (AP) Meeting 9/19-21 in Bethesda, MD. A couple of things of note:

1. Proposed rule regarding Amendment 5 to the consolidated shark fishery management plan (FMP) won't be out until later this year. HMS AP will likely meet again in late fall to discuss the proposed rule once it is out.
2. The Shark Conservation Act (addresses finning among other things) is still some time away from being effective. This is due to the fact that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has deemed the act 'significant' and this adds to the overall process of rulemaking.
3. NMFS solicited comment from the advisory panel on Amendment 7 to the Bluefin Tuna Plan. We can submit written comment as representatives to the AP on the predraft until October 20th. Amendment 7 could address the following issues: accounting for dead discards in quota, lower quotas, increased interactions, and limited carry forward opportunities.
4. Swordfish Amendment 8: The swordfish fishery has only harvested about 70% of the quota for several years, and there are suggestions to open up the fishery to new members through limited entry or open access, and possibly require tags for swordfish in some or all locations to address the issue of Florida recreational fishermen selling their swordfish to restaurants and dealers. Coastal Program staff recommended managing the commercial swordfish fishery by regions – including Mid-Atlantic - with separate caps and in-season adjustment for each region. However use of tags may not be worth the staff time and cost to address an issue in a small region.

Environmental Review – Susquehanna River eel modeling has been completed for the ongoing FERC relicensing of Conowingo Dam. Presently, there is no volitional passage of eels at Conowingo Dam but US Fish & Wildlife Service does trap and truck elvers/yellow eels above the dam. Results of the eel model indicate that this must be expanded in order to reach the 8.2 yellow eel target for the watershed developed based on carrying capacity and surface area above

the dam. The new plan establishes annual stocking target of ~1 million elvers/yellow eels and will likely target areas above York Haven Dam and/or areas with known elliptio (mussel) populations. Passive integrated transponder tagging a subsample of yellow eels will be necessary in order to determine fall outmigration pattern and likely turbine shutdown scenarios.

Eel restoration will be a priority in settlement talks with Exelon during the relicensing of Conowingo Dam. In addition, a prioritized list of relicensing requirements to be instituted by Exelon was drafted and submitted to agencies for comments and will serve as the framework for settlement negotiations initiated in October.

Continue to meet with various agencies including Power Plant Research Program to discuss the impact of the ongoing Army Corp of Engineers/MDE/DNR cooperative sediment study in the pool above Conowingo Dam and its potential impact on the settlement discussions with Exelon. The transport and loading sediment model led by the Army Corps of Engineers will not be completed for 1-2 years depending on its complexity and funding but preliminary results indicate that sediment capacity will be reached in approximately 10 years and a higher amount of sediment is reaching the bay due to the large amount stored in the pool. Staff has joined the Lower Susquehanna River Watershed Assessment group to better keep informed of the sediment issues in the river.

Completed reviews of 13 tidal or non-tidal projects including the Naval Surface Warfare Center, Dahlgren Division Outdoor Research, Development and Test and Evaluation Activities Draft Environmental Impact Statement which will impact boating on the Potomac River due to proposed on-site upgrades. Also reviewed the Environmental Assessment for the Rowley Training Center (Homeland Security) in Laurel, MD, both of these projects were reviewed in light of recreational and commercial fishery impacts and potential ecological impacts associated with potential expansion. Coordinating with Naval Support Facility at Indian Head to complete review of the project to site the fire suppression intake pipe in Mattawoman Creek. Comments included acceptable in-river warnings concerning the intake pipe.

Met with NGOs, PA DEP and USFWS about future negotiation issues with Exelon concerning Conowingo Dam as a result of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing. Issues discussed this session included their debris management plan, proposed Mason Dixon trail, land transfer involving DNR's Lands Acquisition and Parks, webcams for fish passage and osprey nests, swimming pool upgrades, foot paths, bird viewing platform, automated buoys in the lower Susquehanna River and the construction of a Cecil county boat ramp.

Reviewing Exelon's Forest Legacy Area and comments generated for a possible letter to FERC due to its inadequacies. These include minimum shoreline management and sediment and erosion plans and a lack of a comprehensive needs assessment.

Aquaculture Division

Oyster Aquaculture Site Visit with NRP - Organized and attended a site visit with NRP officers to tour the Horn Point hatchery and the Hooper's Island Oyster Aquaculture Company. This visit was arranged to provide NRP with an opportunity to observe seed oyster production as well as shellfish aquaculture production practices in use by existing growers. Staff is working with NRP to identify and evaluate enforcement concerns over reducing the harvest size

minimum for the shellfish aquaculture industry without seasonal restrictions. A follow-up meeting to discuss this issue will be scheduled for mid-October.

Field Operations/Marylanders Grow Oysters (MGO) - Assisted Oyster Recovery Partnership (ORP) with spat deliveries to the Magothy River, Bodkin Creek, Stoney Creek, Rock Creek, LaTrappe Creek, San Domingo Creek, and Chesapeake Beach. Oysters and cages were also delivered to Chester River, Wicomico River, St. Mary's River, Patuxent River and Pope's Creek. A delivery was also made to the elementary school in Rock Hall. They use the oysters and cages as part of their bay curriculum, having the students monitor the oysters and draw conclusions regarding the results. This completes three weeks of deliveries. One more week remains, then all 24 areas in the MGO program will have their oysters.

Assisted the Stump Cove Oyster Company in an oyster relay operation to move oysters from the company's water column lease in restricted waters in the Little Choptank River to their new lease in conditionally approved waters in Phillips Creek. The new lease was recently issued and the company must have all oysters that they intend to sell this winter relayed to the approved waters by October 1st. Staff was present to assist NRP in providing oversight to the relay operation and help the company complete the operation in a timely manner.

Updated the 2012 Maryland Shellfish Growers list and spreadsheet. Phone interviews were conducted with existing shellfish growers to obtain current and accurate information on each company's marketing and sales plans. Staff is developing a list of shellfish growers, in cooperation with Fisheries Marketing, which will be posted on our website and distributed to the public by request.

Shellfish Aquaculture Harvester Permit and Registration Card Issuance - Processed and issued an additional 14 permit and registration card packages on September 5. We have now issued permit packages to a total of 274 of 361 active leases to date. Several leaseholders were issued registration cards for new employees that were requested through our Shellfish Aquaculture Harvester Permit (SAHP) Modification Form. The remaining leases have not been issued permits because they: have failed to submit necessary documentation to be permitted; are restoration leases awaiting conversion to a demonstration lease and are awaiting the next permit batch process; are new leases and have not been sent SAHP applications; or are in the process of a transfer.

Terminations – Failure to submit required forms - Aquaculture laws and regulations require that a leaseholder submit an annual report documenting the use of the lease during the prior year and submit an application for Shellfish Aquaculture Harvester Permits and Registration Cards. The Department mailed blank copies of the required forms along with a rent invoice for each of these leases on February 1. The completed forms were due to the Department on March 15. The Department then mailed a delinquency notice and duplicate forms on July 20 requesting that they be completed and returned by August 3. On August 22, 18 leases were terminated for failure to respond to the delinquency notice and submit these necessary forms. Recipients have 30 days to submit a letter to Secretary of the Department requesting review of the decision. To date, 9 response letters have been received and decision to terminate reversed. The last day to receive letters requesting reversal of the decision is September 25.

Terminations – Non-Usage – The Department mailed a letter to all leaseholders on November 16, 2009 explaining that new laws affecting shellfish leaseholders require all new and existing leaseholders to actively use their leases for commercial purposes. A report accompanied that letter and required the leaseholder to declare intent to actively use the lease for commercial purposes in accordance with the new laws. Subsequent mailings on February 1, 2011 and January 30, 2012 included a yearly report form for the leaseholder to complete for 2010 and 2011, respectively. These reports required the leaseholder to detail planting and harvesting activities on the lease in accordance with the commercial usage requirements referenced above. A review of reports submitted to the Department indicated that 35 leases had not actively used the lease over the past two years, and thus have failed to comply with the usage requirements. On September 4, 2012, 35 leases were mailed a termination letter for failure to actively use their lease in accordance with the laws and regulations. Recipients have 30 days to submit a letter to Secretary of the Department requesting review of the decision. October 5th will be the last day to receive letters requesting reversal of the decision. Four phone calls have been received by staff to date.

FDA Central Region State Shellfish Program Managers' Meeting - Attended the Central Region State Shellfish Program Managers meeting in Philadelphia, PA on September 6 - 7. Staff presented the Department's Shellfish Aquaculture Harvester Permit and Registration Card program as one of the State's key accomplishments related to implementation of the National Shellfish Sanitation Program. We were commended for this program; specifically, the implementation of the monthly reporting requirement for aquaculture harvesters. Other topics of the meeting included, oyster gardening, patrol frequency/evaluations, enforcement, recalls, tagging, and restoration.

Leasing/Permitting -

Lease Site Totals		Acreage Totals
161	Submitted since 9/7/10 (SLL+WC)	3870.794
32	Executed since 9/7/10 (SLL only)	1181.75
16	Executed since 9/7/10 (WC only)	69.26
48	All executed since 9/7/10	1251.01
4	Pending Execution (SLL+WC)	144.1
34	Terminated/Withdrawn	1306
83	Still in process since 9/7/10 (SLL+WC)	1364
5	Incomplete	64.3
99	All applications submitted since 8/1/11	1320.512
62	Water Column submitted since 8/1/11	324.7458
9	Water Column executed since 8/1/11	29.78
8	In-water nursery (upweller) apps since 8/1/11 Subset of WC	0.5395
26	Sanctuary submitted since 8/1/11	158.0037
2	Sanctuary executed since 8/1/11	30.7

Highlights:

- 11 new water column applications were received, all from the same applicant and all proposed in St. Clement's Bay, St. Mary's County. The total area requested is 311 acres.
- 7 lease transfers have been executed. 5 remain pending, 1 of which has not been processed due to incomplete paperwork.
- 2 lease renewal agreements were mailed out for signatures.
- 1 new proposed lease public notice was submitted for publication beginning 9/21/12.
- 1 new Nursery Permit Application for on-land upwellers and remote setting tanks was processed.
- 7 new lease applications were received on 9/10 all from the same applicant for sites in the Nanticoke River. These are all re-applications for grounds that have been long managed and worked by him but that (for legal reasons) required re-application in his name. In doing so, he is consolidating multiple leases into single, larger areas. The total area of his applications is ~315 acres. A portion of the acreage falls within the sanctuary.
- 7 lease transfer applications were received on 9/10 from the same individual in the same tributary and for similar reasons described above. A total of 12 transfers are now pending.
- 1 new proposed lease public notice was submitted for publication beginning 9/14/12.
- 1 new water column lease site was referred to hydrographic operations for a survey.
- 5 shellfish lease application packets have been submitted to the Corps since last update.
- Met with a representative from Environmental Review (ER) to discuss establishing a process for aquaculture reviews of Tidal Wetlands License Applications for piers, dredging and other in-water projects which have the potential to affect existing or proposed lease areas. Staff will receive a monthly summary of all tidal projects received by ER and provide comments with respect to shellfish aquaculture impacts by the MDE-specified due date. Staff will discuss directly with MDE how to enable the review of smaller-scale projects of that nature which are never sent to ER for review or put out on public notice.

Inland Fisheries Division

Paint Branch - Conducted annual electrofishing surveys on the Good Hope tributary to Paint Branch at Hobbs Drive and the Gum Springs tributary to Paint Branch near the mouth. Staff from the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection and Coastal Resources assisted with the survey and collected data for their own research. Only 1 adult brown trout was found in the Good Hope tributary and one yearling brown trout was found in the Gum Springs tributary. The Paint Branch tributary brown trout continue to hold on despite constant threats from an already heavily developed watershed.

Piney Run - Conducted a single-pass electrofishing survey in Piney Run above Slacks Road on the Maryland State Hospital property in Sykesville. The survey was a continuation of work being done in the tailwater to Piney Run Reservoir to establish baseline data on fish species and habitat for a potential trout fishery. Piney Run is currently too warm for trout but Fisheries is working with the Patapsco Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited and has contacted MDE to get a coldwater release from Piney Run Reservoir. Piney Run Reservoir is supposed to have a coldwater release

based on a permit requirement from MDE but it has never been implemented by Carroll County or enforced by MDE.

Laurel Run - Conducted a fish population survey of Laurel Run, a tributary to Georges Creek, within the Savage River State Forest. The survey showed a low density brook trout population with abundant numbers of blacknose dace, longnose dace, blue ridge sculpins, and fantail darters. This stream is managed as a Youth, Senior, and Blind Put and Take Trout Fishing Area receiving 580 rainbow trout annually.

Tidal Bass - Assisted with electrofishing surveys in the Bird River for largemouth bass. Black bass habitat was poor in the Bird River and no bass were found. Staff attempted to survey Dundee and Saltpeter creeks, however; the conductivity was well above 10,000 in both creeks leaving the generator power ineffective for electrofishing.

Youghiogheny River Catch and Release Trout Fishing Area - Inland Fisheries, Garrett College students, and volunteers completed trout population surveys at the Hoyes and Sang Run stations in the Youghiogheny River. Trout populations are still not at the management target of 1,000 trout per mile due to two consecutive years of very hot weather and low flows during the critical summer period. Brookefield Power Company supplies coldwater releases and maintains a 40 cfs minimum flow from the Deep Creek Lake Hydro Station in an attempt to maintain coldwater habitat during the summer. Despite lower than optimal trout densities, the population at the Hoyes Station was 590 adult trout per mile, with brown trout measuring up to 21 inches and rainbow trout measuring 18.5 inches. One brook trout was collected at this station. Trout densities were considerably lower at Sang Run, 4 miles downstream, with less than 100 adult trout per mile. However, trophy brown trout and rainbow trout were collected within this station. All fish species were collected as well as part of the Youghiogheny River Biological Gradient study – a total of 12 species.



Trophy Brown Trout from the Yough River C&R Area and GC Students and volunteers.

Little Seneca Creek - Stocked approximately 8,000 rainbow trout fingerlings from Albert Powell Hatchery into Little Seneca Creek as part of a put- and-grow program to provide catchable size trout in the tailwater. Little Seneca Creek is managed under statewide wild trout regulations.

Clifford Branch Trout Relocation - Collected and relocated more than 50 brook trout from a section of Clifford Branch prior to the removal of a dam that was preventing fish passage. The

dam removal project is a cooperative project between the US Fish & Wildlife Service, City of Frederick, Frederick County, and the Potomac Conservancy. Following the project, brook trout will once again have unimpeded access to the headwaters of Clifford Branch on the east slope of Catoctin Mountain.

Winebrenner Run Brook Trout Re-introduction Project - Winebrenner Run, a tributary to Georges Creek in Allegany County, historically supported a brook trout population. However, this stream has been affected by coal mining and acid mine drainage. Biological studies in the headwater areas showed that water quality was adequate to support brook trout once again. Staff obtained 30 brook trout from Laurel Run (Georges Creek Watershed) and released them into Winebrenner Run. Of those 30 fish, 24 were young of year (YOY) and 6 were adults 7-9" in length. The headwaters of this stream originate in the Savage River State Forest, and with this re-introduction effort, brook trout range in the Georges Creek Watershed will increase.

Aaron's Run Brook Trout Re-introduction Project. Aaron's Run, a tributary to the Savage River, most likely supported brook trout prior to coal mining in the watershed. The Aaron's Run watershed was listed on Maryland's 1998-303(d) list of Water Quality Limited Segments for pH. A project initiated in 2005 by MDE and DNR addressed the goals of acid mine drainage remediation, restoration of native fish populations, and recovery of an impaired trout fishery reach in one of the best trout fisheries in Maryland. To achieve these goals, the Maryland Bureau of Mines designed and constructed best acid mine drainage treatment technologies at four sites in the watershed. These projects are now completed and Aaron's Run now has good water quality capable of sustaining native fish populations. Inland and MDE staff along with funding partner Ryan Roberts (National Fish Habitat Partnership Communications Coordinator for the Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies) collected 30 adult and 23 YOY brook trout from Crabtree Creek as well as associated coldwater stream fish species and stocked them into Aarons Run. Aaron's Run is mostly under private ownership; however if the re-introduction of brook trout is successful, this stream could provide recruitment stock into the Savage River Tailwater.



Brook trout in it's new home of Aaron's Run – 2012.

Potomac River Survey Data- Long-term Potomac River seining data for several key fish species were extracted from the Inland Fisheries statewide database and compiled into geometric mean fish per haul for each year 1975 - 2011 (smallmouth bass YOY) and into five year segments (shiners, suckers, sunfish, darters) for fish collected from the lower non-tidal Potomac River (Harpers Ferry to Seneca). Historical data were verified from original data sheets and corrections made in the database. Efforts are continuing to calculate the same information for

the middle and upper sections of the Potomac. Once completed, the long-term trends presented by this data set, along with long-term water quality monitoring, will give biologists a better understanding of how changes in the environment have impacted fish populations.

Youghiogheny River Temperature Monitoring — Data were downloaded from temperature monitors from sites within the Youghiogheny River, Hoyes Run, Cove Run, North Branch Potomac River, and the Savage River Watershed. These data will be used to better manage coldwater trout resources.

Savage River State Forest Timber Sale Review - Met with Forest Service and Heritage Service staff regarding a 62-acre commercial thinning. We conducted a field review of the site and we observed:

- There was waist-high cinnamon fern present - this is an indicator of hydric soils and likely wetlands. Thus the recommendation to avoid the wetlands.
- Spiker Run – a wild brook trout stream - is close to the northern end of the sale and it should be buffered and protected.

Savage River State Forest Coal Mining Lease Proposal - Meadowland Properties LLC proposed a mineral lease for deep mined coal under Savage River State Forest within the Mill Run/Michaels Run Watershed. The proposal by the applicant stated: "There are no other expected detrimental effects." Meadowland did not present any hydrologic studies or monitoring plans on Michaels Run in the Mill Run Watershed. The map shows the proposed mining taking place directly under the streambed of Michaels Run - which staff asserts is not acceptable. A hydrologic study is a necessary component of this proposal to determine the effects of deep mining in the Mill Run/Michaels Run watershed on surface water quality/quantity in these streams.

Coal Mining Applications - Provided comments to Environmental Review Unit on the following:

- 10 acre strip mine application near Midlothian (Allegany County) in the Staub Run Watershed, a Use III stream, and a tributary to Georges Creek. The stormwater pond outflow must maintain temperatures < 68° F, neutral pH, and low turbidity levels. A viable brook trout population has recently been documented in Staub Run so strict sediment control must be enforced at this site. Also, it is highly recommended that post-land use should be re-forestation on this 10 acre site to maintain the integrity of the watershed and protect long-term well being of the brook trout population.
- 14 acre strip mine near Klondike (Allegany County). This proposal is in the Squirrel Neck Run watershed; however the status of brook trout populations in this stream is unknown. We should still be requiring strict enforcement for water quality in the release waters from the ponds as well as strict sediment control on the site. Also, we requested the post land use to be forestry to maintain the integrity of the watershed.
- A deep mine amendment to an existing deep mine in the Aaron's Run watershed. Aaron's Run is a tributary to the Savage River Tailwater, one of Maryland's premier wild trout fisheries and trout fishing destinations. Trout have re-colonized the lower portion of Aaron's Run due to the Acid Mine Drainage migration project recently completed by MDE. Inland Fisheries recently re-introduced brook trout into the upper portion of this

stream that now has adequate water quality. Given the significance and sensitivity of the aquatic resources supported by Aaron's Run strict BMP;s must be required, maintained and enforced for the treated effluent with regards to protect sensitive aquatic resources. Also, we requested information on any proposed hydrologic studies within the mining area.

Angler Access — Environmental Review Unit comments were expedited to repair stone work on the Casselman River Bridge Repair in order to restore angler access to a section of the Delayed Harvest Trout Fishing Area. About 50 yards upstream and downstream of the bridge are currently “off-limits” to the public and anglers until the work is completed.

Drafted plans to improve the access road and parking area at the McCoole Fisheries Management Area on the North Branch Potomac River. Estimated costs exceed \$10,000 and will have to be done by a contractor. Staff will research funding sources to improve this site.

Strip Mine Revegetation Field Reviews - Participated in the Land Reclamation Committee's (LRC) strip mine revegetation field reviews for bond releases. We evaluated 12 reclaimed strip mines in Garrett and Allegany Counties totaling 162 acres. Only one strip mine did not meet the required amount of vegetated cover needed to release the bond on the property, and the operator will have to improve the site before spring 2013. We also reviewed three amendments to existing strip mines regarding post land use change. Unfortunately the landowners decided to change land use from forestry to pasture.

Fish Kill Investigation - Investigated a possible fish kill in the Left Fork of Paint Branch at Maydale Nature Center at the request of the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection. It was discovered that approximately 30 alewife had been dumped from the bridge over the Left Fork entering the Nature Center.

Fish Health - Provided 25 young-of-year largemouth bass from Tuckahoe Lake for an annual statewide mercury deposition/contamination study.

Outreach - Represented DNR Inland Fisheries at the National Hunting and Fishing Day event at the Marriottsville Gun Club. Staff manned an exhibit about the Maryland Youth Fishing Club, signed up new members and assisted with a kids casting event.

Inland Fisheries and Resource Assessment staff along with former Western Region Manager Ken Pavol floated the Potomac River in Frederick County with outdoor legend, Lefty Kreh. Kreh, a Maryland native and long time Potomac angler has expressed concerns that the river is not as healthy as it once was. This was a great opportunity for all involved to share what they know about the river in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere and enjoy the Potomac first hand. Ken Pavol was kind enough to bring his personal fishing raft, the perfect platform for Lefty to fly fish from, down from Garrett County for the trip,.

Attended the American Bass Anglers tournament at Smallwood State Park and monitored the oxygen in the release boat to decrease the chance of mortalities.

Received report of small snakeheads collected in a stream in Allegany County. The angler sent photos of the fish in question, and fortunately the fish were identified as Blue Ridge sculpins and fantail darters.

Attended the Maryland Fishing Challenge Grand Finale at Sandy Point Park to coordinate the Youth Component awards. Of 19 youth selected throughout the summer, 14 were in attendance along with the sponsors of the guided fishing trips that each youth received. Staff also set-up and manned the Inland Fish Tank for the Finale and two day Seafood Festival event, provided parking assistance, and shuttled participants.

Met with Northern Garrett High School teacher Rebecca Kenyon-Sisler to organize a public event to celebrate the Cove Run Brook Trout Restoration Project. Tentative date is Saturday April 27 with a rain date of May 4. Other schools in Garrett County are aware of this project and they are interested in starting similar projects.

Conducted electrofishing and wading training for students enrolled in Garrett College's Natural Resource and Wildlife Technology Program. These 11 students will provide nearly 300 man-hours of volunteer time in order to conduct fish population surveys in the Youghiogheny River, Hoyes Run, Muddy Creek, and the North Branch Potomac River this fall.



Wading training for GC students on the Yough – what a hoot!!!

Western Region staff collected juvenile gamefish and panfish from Deep Creek Lake for display in the Deep Creek Lake Discovery Center Aquarium to educate the public on the fishes of Deep Creek Lake.

Submitted an Angler's Log report on some awesome channel catfish fishing on the Youghiogheny Reservoir and Savage River Tailwater Trout Population Survey Results.

Gave a presentation to the GC Natural Resources and Wildlife Technology Fisheries students. The presentation highlighted the wonderful field and technical experience to be gained by participating in the Youghiogheny Chapter of Trout Unlimited's (TU) Annual Garrett College (GC) Scholarship initiative to restore the brown trout fishery in Muddy Creek. The participant responsibilities include: monthly water quality analysis at two sample stations; conducting aquatic macro-invertebrate and fish population surveys; conducting fingerling trout stocking, limestone deposition and periodic inspection of liming sites; giving a presentation to the GC

Water Quality class and to the Youghiogheny Chapter of TU; and preparing an annual progress report submitted to TU and Fisheries Service. Muddy Creek is a major tributary to the Youghiogheny River. Acid deposition has severely degraded water quality in Muddy Creek to a point where it could no longer support a year-round trout population. The deposition of limestone improves the water quality and restores the fish population. The scholarship has been successful in continuing these efforts.

Hatcheries Division

Coldwater hatcheries – Albert Powell Hatchery continued work on their hatch room renovation. Changes should increase survival and growth of early life-stage trout. Staff fabricated hatch room tank frames. Direct purchase of necessary materials and in-house cutting and welding by hatchery staff resulted in a cost savings of approximately \$8,000 for these frames.

Bear Creek Hatchery continued to relocate their recirculating aquaculture system to an exterior pole building in order to improve operational efficiency. Albert Powell Hatchery staff assisted Bear Creek with installation of a new concrete floor to support the culture systems. Installation of a new outdoor fiberglass raceway system is also underway and will also improve production potential for this facility.

The fall trout stocking schedule has been finalized and there will be some really nice fish available for anglers beginning in October.

Albert Powell Hatchery will again supply the popular “Trout in the Classroom” project with rainbow trout eggs and food for the current school year. There are over 50 schools in eight Maryland counties that participate in the program. Some of these counties have incorporated this project into their core curriculum.

Albert Powell Hatchery transported 5,000 tiger musky from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission’s Huntsdale Hatchery and distributed them to various Inland Fisheries regional programs for the benefit of Maryland anglers.

Unicorn Lake Hatchery – Continues to struggle with getting their water supply renovation project underway. Various delays in the planning process have pushed the realistic completion date closer to the spring 2013 production season. Staff is working with Albert Powell Hatchery and Manning Hatchery to plan alternative culture strategies for trout and largemouth bass production in the event that construction activities negatively impact upcoming operations.

The hatchery provided 200 bluegill for Carroll County’s Science Research high school program. As a result of this interaction, staff was able to negotiate a cooperative agreement with Carroll County schools to grow green sunfish in the science labs. Unicorn Lake Hatchery will provide excess green sunfish juveniles for use in educational programs. At the conclusion of the student research projects, the fish will be transferred to Manning Hatchery for use as hybrid sunfish brood stock. This solves a persistent availability problem regarding adult green sunfish for hatchery production needs and will ensure that adequate supplies of hybrid sunfish are available for children’s fishing rodeos in the years to come.

Staff participated in the Kent County Outdoor Education program held at Eastern Neck Island. Approximately 120 fourth grade students from five area schools participated in the program to learn about local natural resources. Other presenters included the Kent County Soil Conservation Service, University of Maryland Extension Service and the Sassafras Riverkeeper.

Manning Hatchery – Assisted GenOn Energy Chalk Point Generation Station’s annual open house at their Chalk Point Aquaculture Center. This was a great opportunity to highlight the cooperative relationship between the power company and Fisheries Service’s restoration programs.

Anadromous Restoration - Is treating captive Atlantic sturgeon for the sea lice crustacean *Argulus sp.* for the second time this year. These sturgeon are part of the captive breeding population at GenOn’s Chalk Point Generating station in Aquasco, MD. Unfortunately, the first treatment of 2012 was unsuccessful. We hypothesized that the sturgeon were “off feed” during the treatment period. Under the protocol of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Investigational New Animal Drug (INAD) program, biologists administered the experimental drug emamectin benzoate (known as “SLICE”) by top coating feed. SLICE was developed specifically for the control of sea lice infestations in farmed salmon and trout. SLICE is metabolized slowly, resulting in an extended period of protection (up to nine weeks) from lice after treatment. Due to very warm water temperatures and intensive tank culture conditions, sturgeon become susceptible to these types of parasites. In previous years, staff at GenOn manually removed the sea lice from infected fish by scrubbing and hosing off each fish. This is time consuming and very stressful to the sturgeon. The sturgeon were administered this treatment for a seven-day period. An examination will be conducted ten days post treatment. Previous treatments suggest that SLICE can be an effective treatment for external parasites.

In response to angler reports of sturgeon breaching in Marshyhope Creek and the main stem Nanticoke River, staff set several gill nets in an effort to collect Atlantic sturgeon. With assistance and guidance from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Ph.D. candidate Matt Balazik, staff set large mesh anchored gill net at locations suspected to be appropriate for sturgeon collection. No sturgeon were encountered during sampling, but it is likely that we missed the peak season for collections, since it took some time to put together the sampling effort. The project developed a proposal for federal funding to contribute to the coast wide sturgeon tagging and tracking network and Nanticoke River sampling and tracking will be included in the project. This study could shed light on the migratory patterns of adult and sub-adult Atlantic sturgeon throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Staff continued the annual juvenile shad survey on the Patuxent River and Choptank River. The survey assesses American shad and hickory shad stocking efficacy and serves to estimate wild origin juvenile shad abundance in the target tributaries. During the fifth week of sampling, a large collection of 322 juvenile American shad was captured in the Choptank River at the Martinak seine site. Though this is the largest single catch since the inception of the restoration effort, it is merely a curiosity at this juncture and by itself is not indicative of any population trend. Shad are schooling fish and a sample seine haul will occasionally catch a large number of juveniles. Analysis of the complete sampling season is needed before conclusions can be made.

Piney Point Aquaculture Center – Staff from several projects coordinated to replenish oyster shell stocks at Piney Point, which are used to produce shell bags for aquaculture projects. Unprecedented demand for shell bags in 2012 depleted the oyster shell stockpile at the facility. Fisheries Service’s Anadromous Restoration Program and Unicorn Lake Hatchery coordinated with Shellfish Division to transport oyster shell to Piney Point from the Grasonville oyster shell stockpile. DNR Engineering & Construction loaned the necessary heavy equipment to Fisheries Service to load and transport the shell. To date, 4,500 bushels have been delivered to Piney Point and deliveries will continue as schedules permit. This cooperation allows shell bag production to continue while the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) inmate crews are available to assist. The inmate crews can produce 800 bags per day when weather conditions are optimal.

Piney Point provided 26,000 spat on shell to a local lease holder and 1,250 shell bags to a local remote setting program participant. Piney Point has provided more than 48,000 shell bags in 2012 to support the developing aquaculture industry in Maryland.

Piney Point provided cages and bagged shell to the Marylanders Grow Oysters (MGO) program. To date they have produced nearly 100 cages filled with spat on shell and 780 bags (approximately one million spat) to support this popular program. The staff also reconditions cages with the help of the DPSCS inmate work crews and these are returned to the MGO project.

Cooperative culture facilities – Met with DNR Wildlife & Heritage Service and Maryland Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) to discuss development of a culture project for the endangered Eastern hellbender salamander. The project proposes to collect native hellbender eggs from the Casselman River and rear them to juvenile size at the DJS Meadow Mountain Youth Camp. If successful, the juveniles will be stocked back into the Casselman River. Sampling for eggs begins next week with assistance from Purdue University’s Jeff Briggler. The goal of the project is to provide “head start” culture to improve juvenile survival to the adult life stage in wild habitats.

Cooperative Management Investigations and Fish Health

SustainaFest - SustainaFest is a new, locally sponsored, non-profit with an environmental mission. Partners are: Center for Environment & Society at Washington College, Council Fire, Key School, and Living Classrooms Foundation. It will be held on October 6 at Saint Johns College a “friend-raiser” reception and screening nine award-winning films from the 2012 Mountain film in Telluride Film Festival. Visit the SustainaFest website for details <http://SustainaFest.org>

Shellfish Health – The latest issue of the Journal of Marine Research is dedicated to the Ecology of Infectious Disease (EID) project that integrates field studies of marine invertebrate disease including MSX and dermo disease resistance, disease interactions, and disease epizootiology, genetic studies, circulation modeling, population modeling and larval dynamics to increase understanding of marine diseases through the program.

PDF files are posted on the Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory website:
<http://hsrl.rutgers.edu/research/EID%20paper%20list.htm>

Wildlife - Birds - Avian botulism was confirmed by the National Wildlife Health Center as the cause of the 500+ bird die-off on Poplar Island. Blue-green algal blooms continue.

Deer - Dead deer are being reported in several counties on the Eastern Shore and Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease is suspected. Three carcasses were examined last week with samples sent to the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study for diagnostic testing. This viral disease does not affect humans, but has been associated with deer population decreases in some states.

Rabbits - A mortality event in wild rabbits was reported by the manager at the Ayton tree nursery near Preston in Caroline County, however, no carcasses were saved for examination. Tularemia is one of the diseases of concern and is a human pathogen. Since it is a reportable disease MDA and DHMH were notified of the possibility. The nursery manager was contacted to inform him of the zoonotic disease potential.

Mid-Atlantic Zoonotic and Vector-borne Disease - meeting was held at COL with 17 participants in attendance from MDA, MD DHMH, county health departments, and the Department of Defense. This meeting informs partners about diseases of concern around the state in domestic/wild animals as well as human health.

Fisheries Marketing Division

Wholesaler Outreach –Attended a sales meeting of a local wholesaler to update the staff on the promotions and outreach in which the department is currently engaged. This is being done with the intent to increase the amount of chefs in our current ‘network’. The more chefs the easier it is to make promotions a success.

United States Department of State – Attended the State Department’s culinary ambassador’s event. While there we were working with some of the nation’s biggest chefs to educate them about the True Blue program.

Maryland Seafood Festival – Organized a Chef Demo Tent at the Maryland Seafood Festival. Over the course of the weekend we had 15 chefs preparing Maryland seafood for over 1,500 people. Visit www.Facebook.com/MarylandSeafood to see pictures of the chefs, food, and audience.

Communications and Outreach Division

Web Site -

News

NRP Continues to Step Up Enforcement to Stop Illegal Fishing
http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/news/story.asp?story_id=271

Striped Bass Open House

http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/news/story.asp?story_id=270

Oregon Angler Catches Maryland State Record Catfish

http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/news/story.asp?story_id=269

Annapolis Angler Wins Grand Prize at Maryland Fishing Challenge Finale
http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/news/story.asp?story_id=268

Angler Catches State Record Scalloped Hammerhead at White Marlin Open
http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/news/story.asp?story_id=266

DNR Holds True Blue Contest for Mermaid's Kiss Oysterfest Passes
http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/news/story.asp?story_id=267

Angler's Log - 124 Angler's Log submissions were reviewed and posted.

Fishing Challenge Online Award Entries - There was a total of 1161 individual submissions for awards during the 2011/2012 year (through Labor Day (Sep 3, 2012)). This represents a total of 1040 individuals. The 2012/2013 Challenge began Sep 4, 2012, a total of 25 entries have been submitted to date.

Public Notices – Five public notices were posted: 3 applications for Shellfish Aquaculture Leases; 2012 commercial horseshoe crab season modification; and commercial striped bass hook and line harvest closure <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/notices/notices.asp>.

Updates – Web updates include: commercial late and violations reports; striped bass harvest charts; True Blue promotion web site; Fishing Challenge web site; FromTheBay page; Bloede Dam page; and Fisheries Calendar (public notices, blue crab meeting).

Fishing Reports - The fishing report covered the good fishing in the bay for a mix of striped bass, bluefish and Spanish mackerel. Large white perch are beginning to move into deeper water in the lower sections of the tidal rivers. Freshwater fishermen are enjoying good fishing for smallmouth bass in the western region of the state and good largemouth bass fishing throughout the state. Ocean City fishermen are catching flounder and a mix of summer species. September 12 report (<http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/fishingreport/index.asp?d=09122012>) highlighted Maryland Fishing Challenge Finale at Sandy Point State Park. Sponsors and winners were listed.

September 19 report (<http://dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/fishingreport/index.asp?d=09192012>) highlighted the need to continue championing conservation of our resources and reprinted a conservation pledge from 1968. The uptick in fall trout fishing was also a highlight.

Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/MDDNRFisheriesService> - Facebook fan base reached 524 with an effective reach of 746 people in 20 countries, a 10% increase over last week. 58 percent of our followers are male in the 35 to 44 year old range. Our potential reach is more than 165,000. Last week's posts included an article on the economic impact of bass tournaments in Charles County, announcement and links for the Commercial Striped Bass Open House in Easton, state records (snowy grouper and scalloped hammerhead shark), Diamond Jim posts, and links to the weekly fishing report. A brief conversation regarding flathead catfish generated some

activity with about 70 engaged users, 16 of which were talking about it outside of the Fisheries forum.

Twitter <http://twitter.com/#!/mddnrfish> - @MDDNRFISH is now being followed by 1440 Twitter accounts, tweets broadcasted include public notices, web page updates, press releases and other current news.

E-mail subscribers list (Constant Contact) - 380 subscribers to date. E-mails were sent on the following topics:

Best Fall Fishing to Tidal Bass

Tidal - Two Free Fishing areas on the coast

Attention Washington County Boaters

NRP Continues to Step Up Enforcement to Stop Illegal Fishing

Oregon Angler Catches Maryland State Record Catfish

Press Releases – 5 press releases were issued (see links above): DNR Opens Two New Coastal Free Fishing Areas in Ocean City; State Record Scalloped Hammerhead Shark; State Record 84-pound Blue Catfish; True Blue; MFC Grand Prize Winner.

Customer Service – Requests covered topics including fall trout stocking, species identification, recreational regulations, recreational licensing, live bait prohibitions, requests to volunteer/internship, recipes (crab cake), oyster festival, oyster bar map request, fishing opportunities, request for map of special trout management areas, lake eutrophication issues, snakehead, Piney Run Park Info, stocking permit application, old fishing license research request, scientific collection permit request, My First Fish program, Identity Theft Inquiry, complaint on crabs served at restaurant.

Maryland Fishing Challenge - Attended to phone calls and e-mails regarding last minute entries, questions about the awards ceremony, entry into the Seafood Festival and prizes. Final “My 1st Fish” entries were mailed. Entry cards and name labels were printed for all contestants and last minute entries were emailed their parking pass and instructions. 92 Award Certificates were mailed to entrants and 12 twelve individuals were entered into the contest.

The Fishing Challenge Awards ceremony went off without a hitch. The Fishing Challenge supporting organizations participated in “Fishing in Maryland Promenade” along the path next to the stage seating area the morning of the event. We also organized an Angler’s Legacy pledge table using the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation format to sign up mentors, resulting in about 50 pledges from anglers to “take someone new fishing this year.”

Maryland Fishing Challenge Finale Press Release -
<http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/dnrnews/pressrelease2012/090812.asp>

DNR Fisheries hosted displays in a large tent for both days of the Maryland Seafood Festival. The DNR Fisheries displays included the Fisheries booth, the Inland Fisheries aquarium featuring snakeheads, catfish and other attractive species, and the Aquatic Education group featuring juvenile horseshoe crabs.

Graphics - Updated “FromTheBay” graphic. Finalized and printed Fishing Challenge banners, signage and posters. A total of 57 posters were printed, most were for the Striped Bass Open Houses.

Web Analytics - Total page views of Fisheries Web Site

- 8/27 – 9/02 = 74,242
- 9/03 – 9/09 = 65,922
- 9/10 – 9/16 = 69,921
- 9/17 – 9/23 = 68,189

Artificial Reef Updates –

Cook’s Pt. Reef Ball site, change in deployment schedule - DNR and CBF deployed the final batch of MSSA loaned reef balls on September 20th at the Cook’s Pt reef ball site.

Approximately 2.4 million more spat on shell were seeded on top of the reef site after the last 50 reef balls were deployed, which completed the CBF/MARI Cooks Point Reef project for 2012.

Total counts for Cooks Point Reef Project, after deployment of final 50 reef balls, on September 20, 2012 (4 acre northern expansion, “Site 3A-4A”):

- 240 Mini Bay Ball Reef Balls
- 60 Low Pro Reef Balls
- Over 645,000 spat on all 300 Reef Balls
- Over 11 Million SOS seeded on top of 4 acres of Reef Balls

Update on St. Mary’s Reef Ball Project - Approximately 90 reef balls are being built at Chesapeake Bay Foundation’s Oyster Restoration Center in Shady Side for the St. Mary’s Oyster Reef project (sited off the College shoreline) under a permit held by Bob Lewis of the St. Mary’s Watershed Association. The target date for deployment is October 13.

Hail Cove reef project - Start date for Hail Cove reef project (along Eastern Neck in the lower Chester River), in partnership with USFWS, is going to be pushed back to late fall or spring. USFWS and DNR are unwilling to accept liability and sign the Vulcan Marine Insurance Agreement on a 300 foot long barge. USFWS is investigating a plan B, which is to hire Langenfelder Marine (LMI) to pick up the rock at Vulcan quarry in Havre De Grace, and deliver to reef site.

Illegal scuttling and abandonment of 18 foot sailboat off Cedar Pt - USCG sent an email to DNR staff late in the evening of Sept 11 which indicated that the Coast Guard received a report regarding an unmanned, adrift 18-ft sailing vessel located in the Chesapeake Bay, approximately 1 mile south of Cedar Point and 3/4 mile offshore, in 30 feet of water. The sailing vessel had no mast and was named EMERALD ISLE. One subject was in the process of sinking the vessel with cinderblocks and reported that he was doing a “reef project”. DNR staff reported to USCG and NRP that this was not an authorized project and it was not on an actual reef site. NRP went out the next morning to find the vessel, and it was already sunk. NRP is charging the subject with illegal abandonment of a vessel. DNR Boating Division/Abandoned Boats program reported the court date is December 14, 2012 in St. Mary's County. NRP has completed the abandoned vessel

report and it is not a hazard to navigation so the Abandoned Boat and Debris Program will wait until the court date to decide when/if it will be removed.

Legislation, Regulation, FMP, Fish Passage and Habitat Protection

Cost Recovery Summer Study (HB1372) – Two work group sessions on cost recovery analysis of the Fisheries Service budget were conducted in September with members of the Sport and Tidal Fisheries Advisory Commissions. The work group sessions were scheduled at the request of the Commissions to provide an opportunity to review and ask questions about how costs within the Fisheries Service budget were assigned to each management sector. The organizational structure and expenditures from the Fisheries Service budget were presented to Commission members in a Q & A format. The sessions were well attended with 17 of the 29 Commission members from both SFAC (7) & TFAC (10) attending. Common themes of interest and concern included: *Greater assignment of several costs to the Community at large *Creation of a fund to support NRP that would potentially reduce the funding commitment from the Fisheries Service budget to NRP * Creation of a Bay User Fee that a broad spectrum of users could pay into *Increase recreational user fees (Some TFAC reps thought recreational fees were too low) *TFAC disagreement over the assignment of crabbing costs associated with a 90% commercial/ 10% recreational split (based on harvest) *Expansion of a seafood dealer license to all that sell Maryland seafood products *Allocation of enforcement activities (some commissioners expressed concern for a lack of recreational enforcement *How will support for any proposed legislation be created for an issue that most are not aware of in a short window of time? *Suggestion of a match of general funds for any increased commercial license fees *Support for streamlining commercial harvest data collection and reporting (electronic reporting) to save money *Success in the legislature will rely on cooperation between the recreational and commercial sectors. A report to the General Assembly will be completed by late October / early November. It is expected that there will be another separate meeting of the TFAC in October (10/11) to conclude discussions on commercial license fee scenarios, and then one or two more meetings with both SFAC and TFAC to finalize the cost recovery report.

Fishery Management Plans (FMP)/Fish Passage - Reviewed a draft NOAA document that outlines a plan to examine the restoration potential of the Patuxent River. Part of the effort is to assess the vulnerability of habitats to stressors especially climate change. The purpose of the document is to provide the foundation for developing climate change adaptation strategies for the Middle Patuxent watershed (defined at the southern boundary by Route 231 and Benedict Bridge and Route 50 in the North). The framework is applied at three levels: species, habitats, and project types within the watershed. The following were selected for assessment: yellow perch, river herring, blue crab, and *Spartina patens*; habitats: tidal freshwater wetlands, tidal salt marsh, and submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV); and project types: wild rice restoration, tidal salt marsh restoration, fish passage/ stream restoration, and oyster restoration. DNR staff will be meeting next week to discuss the document and provide additional input. Ultimately, the adaptation strategies would be integrated into existing restoration and conservation efforts in the watershed.

Reviewed a paper on defining the scope of the Chesapeake Bay Sentinel Site Program (CBSSP) and identifying short term goals and actions. The Chesapeake Bay was selected as one of five

initial regional Sentinel Site Cooperatives (SSC) through this NOAA effort. The sentinel site network will leverage existing assets, programs, and resources to bring together long-term monitoring datasets and to focus on the issue of sea level changes. The Chesapeake Bay has a large number of sea level change sentinel site-like components already in place, such as access to high accuracy geodetic infrastructure, access to high accuracy water level records and active water level recorders, and associated long term environmental/ecosystem observations. Priority strategies for the Chesapeake Bay SSC include establishing an integrated network of habitat sentinel sites, developing information products, supporting modeling efforts, enhancing data availability, and providing advisory services. Maryland has already identified climate change tools and research needs in *The Comprehensive Strategy For Reducing Maryland's Vulnerability To Climate Change, Phase I: Sea Level Rise and Coastal Storms (2008)* and *Phase II: Building Societal, Economic And Ecological Resilience (2011)*.

Reviewed the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (NALCC) grant proposals. The grant funds are designated for the quantification and mapping of fish habitat distribution and threats to identify priority areas and conservation corridors. The NALCC extends along the Atlantic coast from Virginia to Nova Scotia.

Completed changes to the Coastal Bays Hard Clam legislative update and submitted the report for review. Final editing for each of the species-specific sections is currently in progress.

Participated in initial discussions and possible implications of preliminary results from the Wildlife & Heritage Service survey of recreational waterfront crab pot bycatch reduction device compliance as the study's fieldwork nears completion.

Participated in a Bloede Dam update meeting which included a recap of the Simkins monitoring results and the Adaptive Management Plan. The project partners are developing a summary document to present the monitoring results to date and make recommendations for moving forward. Under the original Simkins Adaptive Management Plan, monitoring was to be conducted for five years. The project partners believe the monitoring results suggest some modifications can be made to the current monitoring strategies. The project partners finalized the preferred option from the Bloede Dam Alternatives Analysis, i.e., removal of Bloede Dam using a passive sediment approach. Comments from the open public comment period and additional supportive documentation on sediment, the fish ladder, cultural/historical aspects and cost benefits will be finalized in the next two weeks.

Update on the Test Borings at Bloede Dam: the Patapsco River Restoration Project partners contracted Triad Construction Services, Inc. to obtain 14 test borings as part of evaluating the river bottom upstream of the Bloede Dam. The boring work was completed over two days (September 4 - 5). Six test borings were taken within the floodplain, six test borings were taken adjacent to the sewer line and two borings were taken within the river channel. The borings will provide a more detailed analysis of the site and subsurface conditions of the river bed, especially the area near Ilchester Bridge, the point bar on river left, and the sewer line. Earlier this year, the Maryland Geological Survey (MGS) collected seismic data from ground penetrating radar surveys and conducted sediment coring as part of the Bloede Dam Alternatives Analysis. Results from the borings will confirm and enhance the MGS work. The results of the borings will be included in the design report and factored into the design.

Boring equipment on the Patapsco River



photo by Mary Andrews, NOAA

FMP staff reviewed the first draft of the Toxic Contaminants Report for the Chesapeake Bay. This was the first round of reviews by Goal Implementation Team (GIT) members outside the workgroup that drafted the report. There will be additional opportunities to provide comments as the document becomes more refined. The contaminants report addresses the President's Chesapeake Bay Executive Order (EO 13508, May 12, 2009) Strategy for federal agencies to prepare a report summarizing information about the extent and seriousness of toxic contaminants in the Bay. The findings/recommendations from the report will be used to develop new goals for reducing the input of toxic contaminants in 2013 and to develop strategies by 2015 to carry out the goals. The report focuses on using existing information to summarize the extent and seriousness of toxic contaminants on fish and wildlife. Reported PCB effects on fish include mortality, impaired growth and reproduction, disruption of the endocrine and immune systems, biochemical changes, behavioral alteration, and mutagenicity. Biological indicators of a degraded ecosystem have been observed within the Chesapeake Bay watershed and include: increased incidence of infectious disease and parasite infestations contributing to increased mortality; feminization (intersex, plasma vitellogenin) of largemouth and smallmouth bass and other signs of endocrine disruption; reduced reproductive success and recruitment of yellow perch in certain highly urbanized tributaries; and liver and skin tumors of brown bullhead. Preliminary conclusions of the report indicate that there are a limited number of toxic contaminant classes with sufficient data to characterize the extent of their effects. At this time, the report can only recommend establishing reduction goals for PCBs, PAHs, herbicides, and mercury.

Staff met to discuss National Wildlife Federation's project to develop a climate change vulnerability assessment for the Patuxent Watershed. Species biologists (oysters, blue crabs, yellow perch, anadromous fish) will evaluate climate change impacts for their species by life stage and identify potential management options and adaptation strategies.

Reviewed materials for the Sustainable Goal Implementation Team (GIT) conference call. The GIT work plan was reviewed and updated. The full GIT membership was reviewed. Efforts will be made to contact members who have not been attending the bi-annual full GIT meetings. The

next full GIT meeting is scheduled for the first week in December. The meeting goals, objectives and tentative agenda were discussed.

Completed an initial draft of the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Coast horseshoe crab FMP review and forwarded it to VMRC for comment. Made final revisions to the Alosine FMP and Coastal Bays Hard Clam FMP updates. Staff is finishing up final edits for all 22 FMPs.

FMP staff attended the DNR's GIS Council meeting. Topics discussed included the availability of 30cm resolution imagery for the continental US, Maryland Amphibian and Reptile Atlas project, results from a recent Unit Director survey for GIS needs, and membership bylaws for the GIS Council.

Reviewed two proposals for North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative (NALCC) funding. The RFP topic is the quantification and mapping of [fish] habitats, threats, and current range/distribution for inland to coastal species to assess the species-habitat relationships and to identify priority areas and conservation corridors (<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/science/nalcc.html>).

Attended an Atlantic Coast Fish Habitat Partnership (ACFHP) Habitat Assessment Meeting at USFWS. The purpose of the meeting was to review ACFHP's strategic work plan, status of current fish habitat projects supporting the work plan, availability of empirical fish habitat data among Atlantic coast states, and proposed revisions to the work plan.

Reviewed the Centreville Dam Site Characterization Report. The report investigates factors critical to the design of the dam removal including a determination of the quantity of impounded sediments, investigation of potential contaminants, the presence of nearby infrastructure, impacts to natural resources and others. Constraints that will impact design, construction and costs are also discussed. This is a preliminary report with a more involved design phase to be completed at a later time.

Fish Passage - Gave the presentation *Managing Chesapeake Bay's Land Use, Fish Habitat, and Fisheries* at the Chesapeake Bay Commission meeting at Stratford Hall, Virginia. It was well received. This presentation was followed by a presentation on Pennsylvania's Susquehanna River water quality problems (low DO, high pH, high phosphorus, and endocrine disruptors) in critical nursery habitat that have largely ruined their famous smallmouth bass fishery.

Presented *Managing Chesapeake Bay's Land Use, Fish Habitat, and Fisheries* at Leadership Maryland on September 13. Leadership Maryland is an independent statewide leadership program to develop informed senior-level leaders from businesses, education, government, nonprofits and labor unions.

Work continues on developing data collection processes for striped bass stomachs collected during health monitoring by the Fish Health Program at Oxford Lab. Stomachs have been processed to separate empty stomachs from those containing food.

Worked with a private videographer to conduct an interview with Charles County Commissioners President, Candice Quinn Kelly. He is donating his services to produce the video which will be presented in the session to be held at the Alliance Watershed Forum. Staff worked to secure numerous speakers, representing various stakeholders to participate in the session. The session will highlight the science we have developed to link impervious surface and fish habitat. It will then offer session speakers the platform to discuss how they are using the science to support sound conservation planning. As part of this effort, staff is developing a document that will condense planning, zoning and management recommendations proposed in the Mattawoman Ecosystem Based Management Plan in to generic recommendations that citizens and planners across the Bay Region can consider in land use planning approaches.

Working with Climate Change staff to identify species vulnerabilities to sea level rise and changes in seasonal temperatures. We are commenting on several projects including the Patuxent Vulnerability Study, Critical Areas Regulations and Sentinel Site Network Plans.

Staff is meeting with NOAA and staff from Offices of Sustainability to identify projects where we can promote collaboration.

The Scientific Collection Permit (SCP) data off the “hard copy” returns was entered for year 2007 by staff. Staff is continuing to enter data from previous sampling years, including 2012 spring and summer data.

Staff is completing the final week of summer sampling of the estuarine fish community in Wicomico River (Potomac), Gunpowder River, Middle River, Tred Avon River, Mattawoman Creek, Piscataway Creek, Harris Creek, and Broad Creek (Eastern Shore).

Regulations -

The following regulation packages will be circulated for approval in the next week:

Final Action – Adopted as Proposed – Electronic circulation – Summer Flounder

Final Action – Adopted as Proposed – Electronic circulation – Black Bass Tournaments

The following regulation packages are under preparation:

Penalties (annual adjustments), Restitution (system for egregious fishing violations), Blue Crabbing Charters/Education Permits (consolidate into one regulation), Billfish (add roundscale spearfish)

The following regulation packages were submitted to AELR (see APA section for info):

Nontidal (yearly updates), Lobster (ASMFC requirements), Yellow Perch (public notices on website and phone system), Final Actions (all adopted as proposed): Horseshoe Crabs, Oysters (Power Dredge Permit and Lines), and Oysters (PSFA)

The following regulation packages became effective:

Aquaculture — Emergency — 08.02.23.02-.04

The following public notices were issued:

View notices at <http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/fisheries/notices/notices.asp>

Commercial Striped Bass Hook and Line Harvest Modification — Fishery reopens on Tuesday, September 18 and Wednesday, September 19, 2012 with a catch limit of 300 lbs/permit/week. The October hook and line fishery will reopen on Tuesday, October 2, 2012 with a catch limit of 400 lbs/permit/day and 800 lbs/permit/week. Open fishing days will be limited to Tuesdays and Wednesdays only. Published in the Baltimore Sun on Friday, September 14, 2012.

Shellfish Aquaculture Lease — Willey — Application for a shellfish aquaculture water column lease by Robert F. Willey in Mill Cove, St. Mary's County, Maryland. The proposed site is located adjacent to Mr. Willey's existing pier and property on the eastern shore of Mill Cove. Published in the Enterprise on September 14 and September 21, 2012.

Shellfish Aquaculture Lease — Robinson & Robinson — Application for a shellfish aquaculture water column lease by Timothy Robinson and Susan Robinson in Fishing Bay, Dorchester County, Maryland. The proposed site is located just north of Duck Island Cove. Published in the Dorchester Star on September 14 and September 21, 2012.

Shellfish Aquaculture Lease — DeSipio & Tull — Application for a shellfish aquaculture water column lease by Peter DeSipio and John Tull in Chincoteague Bay, Worcester County, Maryland. The proposed site is located east of the Public Landing boat basin and south of Scarboro Creek. Published in the Worcester County Times on September 13 and September 20, 2012.

The following regulation packages have been proposed and are following the APA process:

View proposals in Maryland Register at

<http://www.dsd.state.md.us/MDRegister/mdregister.aspx>

Horseshoe Crabs — Proposed — 08.02.10.01

Maryland Register 7/27/12, Comment Period Ends 8/27/12, Scheduled Effective 10/1/12
Recreational and Commercial fishery changes.

Oysters — Power Dredge Permit and Lines; Hand Tong Lines — Proposed —
08.02.04.09,.12

Maryland Register 7/27/12, Comment Period Ends 8/27/12, Scheduled Effective 10/1/12
Remove permit requirement; fix lines.

Oysters — PSFA — Proposed — 08.02.04.17

Maryland Register 7/27/12, Comment Period Ends 8/27/12, Scheduled Effective 10/1/12
Fix lines.

Summer Flounder — Proposed — 08.02.05.12

Maryland Register 8/24/12, Comment Period Ends 9/24/12, Scheduled Effective 10/29/12
Standardize the declaration period, standardize ownership of a federally permitted vessel, clarify the limit of 2 quotas fished from the same vessel, clarify how overages will be deducted, clarify why public notices are issued, cap the permits at 7

(current number) and allow for transfer of 100% of individual's quota, but with cap on amount of quota any one individual may acquire.

Black Bass Tournament Permit — Proposed — 08.02.01.11

Maryland Register 8/24/12, Comment Period Ends 9/24/12, Scheduled Effective 10/29/12

Require largemouth and smallmouth bass tournament directors to obtain a free permit before conducting bass tournaments in Maryland.

Black Sea Bass — Proposed — 08.02.05.21

Maryland Register 9/7/12, Comment Period Ends 10/9/12, Scheduled Effective 11/12/12

Standardize the declaration period, standardize text regarding ownership of a federally permitted vessel, clarify the limit of 2 quotas fished from the same vessel, clarify how overages will be deducted, clarify why public notices are issued, cap the permits at 14 (current number) and allow for transfer of 100% of individual's quota, but with cap on amount of quota any one individual may acquire.

Nontidal — Proposed — 08.02.11.01, .03

Maryland Register 10/19/12, Comment Period Ends 11/19/12, Scheduled Effective 12/24/12

Allows for night fishing in impoundments larger than 5 acres that are stocked with trout. Places Lion's Park Pond in Allegany County and Avalon Pond (Lost Lake) in Baltimore County on the Put-and-Take Trout Fishing Areas list which will allow anglers of all ages to access the areas for fishing. Makes several clarifications to the put and take trout fishing areas. Changes the Governor's Bridge Natural Area Pond from a catch and return area to a limited harvest area.

Shellfish — General — Lobster — Proposed — 08.02.08.10

Maryland Register 10/19/12, Comment Period Ends 11/19/12, Scheduled Effective 12/24/12

ASMFC requires mandatory v-notching of all female lobsters, immediate release of egg-bearing female lobsters, and a season closure to the landing of lobsters from February 1 through March 31. During the February 1-March 31 closure, lobster potters will have a two week period to remove lobster pots from the water and may set lobster pots one week prior to the end of the closed season.

Yellow Perch — Proposed — 08.02.21.04

Open, close or modify a commercial season by putting notice on the reporting phone system and Fisheries Services' website rather than the newspaper.

The following are current emergency actions in effect:

Fishing in Nontidal Waters — Emergency — 08.02.11.01

Effective June 26 through December 20, 2012

Remove Lion's Park Pond in Allegany County and Avalon Pond (Lost Lake) in Baltimore County from the list of areas limited to individuals under 16 years of age, 65 years of age

and older, and Blind Persons. Both areas will be placed on the Put-and-Take Trout Fishing Areas.

Aquaculture — Emergency — 08.02.23.02-.04

Effective September 13, 2012 through January 15, 2013

Smaller size limit for aquaculture during closed wild fishery, fees and rent for water column leases; seed oyster size.

Fiscal and Management Services Division

Reorganization package – No change.